

**Helpful reminders from the South Carolina Emergency Preparedness Division and DHEC:**

- Listen for weather updates; follow instructions.
- Be sure your car is filled with gas.
- Call your local emergency management office for nearest shelter location and evacuation route.
- Try to leave before nightfall.
- Remember any special dietary needs.
- Arrange for safety of your pets.
- Take bedding and essential clothing.
- Stay away from windows and glass doors.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Shut off electricity, gas and water.
- If you live in a mobile home – LEAVE.
- If an evacuation notice is issued, review this checklist, take your carry out bag or luggage and LEAVE.

**Emergency Checklist**

- ✓ Flashlight with batteries
- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Legal documents (i.e., insurance papers, will)
- ✓ Personal hygiene products
- ✓ Extra eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.
- ✓ Phone numbers of family, physicians, and friends
- ✓ Battery-operated radio
- ✓ Bottled water
- ✓ Canned and nonperishable foods
- ✓ Manual can opener
- ✓ Matches and candles
- ✓ Paper plates, plastic utensils

Place these items in a retrievable carry out bag or luggage if you must go to a shelter.

**Flood Stress**

Flood stress is the feelings and behaviors related to the stress of coping with this event. You may be wondering if you could have done anything differently to protect your possessions. You may have recurring thoughts, dreams, or nightmares about the flooding. You might feel disconnected or numb, angry, hopeless or overwhelmed. You may also act overprotective of yourself or your family. You might have trouble sleeping and be irritable. If you or someone you know needs help coping with the events of this flood, contact your public health department, mental health center, Red Cross Disaster Service Center, or leader of your faith community.

**Helping your Children**

Parents and family members play an important part in helping children cope with stress related to flooding. Keep your family together whenever possible and simply explain what has happened and what you think will happen. Remain calm and re-establish routines as much as possible. Encourage children to talk, ask questions and describe their feelings. Include children in safe cleanup activities.

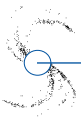
**Helping Yourself**

Take one day at a time and take the time to get organized. Make lists of things to do and decide which tasks are most important; do those first. Eat a healthy, balanced diet and avoid alcohol and caffeine. Ask for help if you need it.

# Hurricane Cares and Concerns

For more information please contact your local county health department. You may also contact DHEC's Emergency Management Office at (803) 737-7261 or (803) 737-7369.





**Recovering from a hurricane is a difficult experience for everyone involved. The concerns about safety after the storm can often be overwhelming. The information in this pamphlet from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control is provided to help you and serve as a guide in the recovery process.**

## Disease Prevention

### **Encephalitis**

Encephalitis is a disease people can get after being bitten by a mosquito that carries the virus. However, encephalitis caused by mosquitoes is rare in South Carolina. Symptoms of encephalitis may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, confusion and convulsions. The best way to avoid this disease is to avoid mosquito bites. Empty out any old tires, pots or containers in your yard or area that contain standing water. Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants and use mosquito repellent.

### **Gastrointestinal Illnesses**

Anyone who comes in contact with water that is contaminated with sewage can contract various germs and can develop gastrointestinal (stomach) illnesses. The most important way to keep from getting these illnesses is to WASH HANDS OFTEN with clean water and soap for at least 10 seconds.

Always wash your hands:

- Before preparing or eating food;
- After toilet use;
- After participating in flood cleanup activities; and
- After handling articles contaminated with floor water or sewage.

### **Hepatitis A**

Flooding of sewage treatment facilities and septic tanks has created concern that citizens will be exposed to Hepatitis A. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and DHEC do not recommend Hepatitis A vaccine for those exposed to flood waters contaminated with sewage. The best protection from all potential food and waterborne disease is to follow recently distributed DHEC prevention recommendations for protecting food and drinking water and maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation during and after flood conditions.

### **Tetanus**

Individuals involved in flood debris cleanup may sustain injuries that can put them at risk for tetanus infections if their tetanus vaccinations are not up to date. The bacteria that causes tetanus is present in many environmental sources. Any new wound or old sore, even if it is minor, may result in a tetanus infection in unprotected individuals. Everyone should be protected against tetanus by having a current tetanus vaccination. If you need a tetanus shot, you can go to the nearest health department.

### **Cleanup**

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease following a hurricane is the proper washing and sanitizing of household items.

- Wash items in a strong detergent solution.
- To sanitize items, soak them in a chlorine solution (1 tablespoon of plain household bleach for every 1 gallon of water) for 15 minutes.
- Rinse with clean, safe water.
- Let items air dry.

Walls, hard-surfaced floors and many other household surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with a solution of 1 cup of bleach to 5 gallons of water. Be particularly careful with surfaces that may come in contact with food.

## Food and Water Safety

Flooding after a hurricane can be a problem for many reasons. Our water, food and utensils can be contaminated with bacteria, sewage and chemical wastes. Our health can be badly affected if we eat foods or drink water that has been in contact with contaminated water. To reduce your risk of contamination, the following tips are provided.

### **Water**

Water sources should be considered unsafe until tested or the proper authorities give an “all clear.” Until then, all water used for drinking, cooking, producing, preparing formula, brushing teeth or washing dishes should be treated.

Water can be treated to reduce biological contamination by boiling. Put the water in a clean container. Bring the water to a full boil and continue boiling for at least 2 minutes. Keep the water covered while boiling. Water suspected of chemical contamination should not be used. It is best to use bottled water from approved sources, if possible.

### **Food**

Most foods will be unsafe to eat. If the food has been under floodwater or floodwater has seeped into a container of food, consider it unsafe. Canned items can be cleaned and sanitized, however, foods with paper, cloth, fiber or cardboard boxes should be thrown away.

Power outages can cause many problems. Frozen and refrigerated foods can be contaminated with bacteria that live in the danger zone (between 45° - 130° F). Your health can be badly affected if you eat foods that have been subjected to these temperatures.

Keep your freezer shut as much as possible. Foods can stay frozen 1 to 3 days. Frozen foods that have thawed completely and are at 45° F or greater for more than 2 hours should be discarded. Partially thawed frozen foods that have ice crystals on them can be refrozen.

### **Infant Formula**

If using canned milk to feed a baby, open a fresh can for each bottle. Mix concentrate and powdered formula with clean, safe water only. Also bottled water from approved sources may be used. Wash bottles with boiled or safe, clean water. When clean safe water is not available, use ready-to-feed formula. If your infant has diarrhea, seek medical attention immediately.

## Cleaning Up After a Storm

Few things are worse than damage to your home from a hurricane, tornado, flood or other type of storm. If there is damage to your home, the first thing to do is be careful. Don't get hurt trying to clean up in a hurry. Make a quick assessment and a list of what the damage is. Much of what is damaged may have to be disposed of in a landfill – but much may be recycled.

Find out what services are being provided in your community. Read the newspaper. Watch television. Listen to the radio. Look for flyers at stores and other convenient retail outlets for specific information. Contact your county or city manager, recycling coordinator, public works or solid waste director or emergency response personnel. These local individuals will be able to provide you the exact information you need to clean up quickly, carefully and properly.

If you have to buy products to clean, buy only what you need and use the products as directed. You can also call DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling at 1-800-768-7348 to find out the names of local solid waste and recycling contacts.

